Introduction

The educated, unemployed has always been a burning problem in Kerala. They are left with no choice but to migrate, the prime reasons being better job prospects, prosperity, having savings at the time of retirement and providing good education to children. Gulf countries in this context have proved to be a boon for many Indians, in particular Kerala.

Migration has generally contributed to a process of social differentiation in Kerala's social strata. This differentiation has led to a drastic change in the social mobility and status stratification of the lower middle class in the Kerala society. It is true that migration to Gulf countries has resulted in improved quality of life, but this seems to be highly peripheral. Lavish lifestyle, huge villas and modern house-hold amenities add to the comforts of the families of the migrants. Though the whole situation appears to be fascinating to the outsiders, the changes are mostly structural in nature. The impacts are more negative than positive.

Available statistics claim that one out of every eight married women has her husband working abroad. Several studies have shown that women, who are left behind, suffer from a series of social and psychological problems like tensions, pressures, conflicts, anxieties and loneliness, induced by separation. To overcome this, most of them take up jobs. But again, the dual role as a working woman and as a care taker at home without support makes these women depressed and helpless.

But not all women are unlucky. A good number of them have joined their husbands too. Thus the divide between the women who are left behind, and the women living with husbands abroad came into the open. The former perceived that the latter were much happier and that life in Gulf was very colourful. But is it really so? The investigator thinks otherwise. The investigation would be incomplete without the inclusion of Arab women. The family, in most cases, provides them with shelter, basic necessities and a relatively secure future, which means that there is little incentive to look for a job or seek other remunerative sources of employment.

The aim of the investigator was to find out, through a comparative cross-cultural study, as to whom among the three groups — the wives of expatriate men, the

expatriate wives in Qatar or the Arab wives have higher marital adjustment, a stress-free life, a positive self-concept and a better quality of life. The sample for the present study has been taken from Kerala and Qatar. For the sake of study, six variables were selected for the study. They were marital adjustment, stress, self concept, quality of life, social interaction pattern and social support. The investigator also intended to determine the relationship of marital adjustment with the other five variables, which were considered to be the major psycho social correlates of marital adjustment.

A well-documented study regarding these issues is the need of the hour. Although studies highlighting stress and related personality variables of people working in the Gulf and their wives have been studied, not a single cross-cultural study was found reported. This study thus gains importance as a unique one of its nature.

Need and Significance of the study

A large number of skilled as well as non skilled people migrate to Gulf to make their lives secure. To the belief of many in the past, gulf was a synonym for money and happiness. The same holds untrue in the present scenario. Rising cost of living and high rents have made it difficult for an expatriate couple to make ends meet. This leads to stress and marital discord.

The condition of the wives of expatriate men has to get a special attention. The long-term absence of their husbands, especially in the formative period of their marriage, makes a great impact on Gulf wives and their family lives. Having a spouse working in a foreign country does not mean a contended life. Most of the wives are not equipped to cope up with such situations. Moreover, the feeling among most of the gulf wives that they are less privileged than their expatriate counterparts adds more stress to their lives. The investigator perceives the need to have a scientific basis for such assumption that people hold.

The review of literature on migration problems reveals that the effects of migration on family and society are many. The effects are both positive and negative in nature. Some of the major effects are the conjugal separation, female-centered families, inter-dependence among relatives and more dependence on

friends, increased work-load and emotional problems for women and also comparatively greater freedom for women. The major impact of migration is felt by the wives of the male migrants by way of disturbed emotional health, economic burden, and dual role responsibilities. The available studies are mostly sociological in nature or economic analysis of the migrant's problems. There is a need to study in depth, the psycho social implications of migration for the wives in terms of their emotional health, feeling of loneliness, problems of adjustment, and marital difficulties, to name a few.

The study would be incomplete without including Arab women who enjoy all the privileges of the native country. How women feel in their own country with their husbands and children when compared to women who have migrated to join their husbands in a totally new country is something interesting to be researched.

The investigator through the present study aims to make an in-depth research into the lives of Gulf wives, expat women and Arab women, with particular emphasis on marital adjustment, stress, quality of life, self-concept, social support and social interaction pattern in order to develop an insight into these issues and raise general awareness among the public regarding the same.

NRIs form the backbone of Kerala's economy. Though the government and other private sector organizations offer a whole lot of incentives in the form of financially-backed schemes and services, little or no effort has been made to alleviate the psycho social problems faced by the NRIs and their wives.

A well-documented study regarding these issues is the need of the hour for formulating any future policies or programs for the NRI community as a whole by the government or private sector firms.

Qatar, being a Muslim nation, gives great importance to women in all aspects. The study would invite the government to think about the problems if any reported by Arab women. This is turn might lend a help to the government to make appropriate changes in the necessary spheres and safeguard their women population.

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The study is entitled as **'Marital Adjustment and its Psychosocial Correlates- A Cross-Cultural Study of Women in Kerala and in Qatar'.**

OBJECTIVES:

1. To find out whether the wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriates wives in Qatar and the Arab wives differ in marital adjustment, stress, self-concept, quality of life, social interaction pattern and social support.
2. To find out whether the wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriates wives in Qatar and the Arab wives differ in marital adjustment, stress, self-concept, quality of life, social interaction pattern and social support with respect to selected socio-demographic variables. (Age, Employment Status, Type of Family, Years of married life, Parental Status, Nature of Job and the Type of Job.)
3. To find out the relationship between the marital adjustment and the selected psycho social correlates (Stress, Self-Concept, Quality Of Life, Social Interaction Pattern and Social Support) of the wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriates wives in Qatar and the Arab wives.
4. To find out the relationship between marital adjustment and selected socio demographic variables (age and years of married life) of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and the Arabs wives.

HYPOTHESES:

1. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in marital adjustment.
2. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in stress.
3. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in self-concept.

4. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in quality of life.

5. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in social interaction pattern.

6. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in social support.

7. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in marital adjustment with respect to selected socio-demographic variables. (Age, Employment Status, Type of Family, Years of married life, Parental Status, Nature of Job and Type of Job)

8. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in stress with respect to socio-demographic variables.

9. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives Qatar and Arab wives in self-concept with respect to socio-demographic variables.

10. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives Qatar and Arab wives in quality of life with respect to socio-demographic variables.

11. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives Qatar and Arab wives in social interaction pattern with respect to socio-demographic variables.

12. There will be no significant difference among wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives in social support with respect to socio-demographic variables.

13. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and stress of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arabs wives.

14. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and self-concept of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives.

15. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and quality of life of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and the Arab wives.

16. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and social interaction pattern of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives.

17. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and social support of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives.

18. There will be no significant relationship between marital adjustment and selected socio-demographic variables of wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives. (Age and Years of Married Life)

METHOD

SAMPLE

A total of 740 married women ranged in age from 19 to 55yeras, with a mean age of 33.92 (SD=8.35) were selected for the study. Among 740 subjects, 300 (40.5%) were wives in Kerala of expatriate men , 200 (27.2%) were expatriate wife in Qatar and 240 (32.3%) were Arab wives. 522 subjects (70.5%) were in the age range of 19years to 40 years and 218 were above 40 years of age (29.5%).

With regard to type of family, the majority of the sample which is 68.5% belonged to nuclear family and 31.5% were from joint families. As regard to the variable years of married life, 499 subjects were with above 5 years of married life (67.4%), 150 subjects with 2 o 5 years (20.3%) and 91 subjects were with below 2 years of marriage (12.3%). Among the subjects 89.2 % were parents and the rest 10.8% were without children.

In the total sample, 50.3% were working and 49.7% were not working. 65.5% of the subjects were employed in non-professional jobs, where as 27.4% were in professional jobs and 7.1% were in technical jobs. 70.9% of the subjects were working in private sector which and 29.1% were in public sector.

Tools Used

The following tools were used for the present study.

1. Marital Adjustment Inventory (Singh,R.H,1987)
2. Harichandran's Stress Inventory (Hari S Chandran, 1994)
3. The Self-Concept Inventory (M.S. Razeena Padmam 1985)
4. Quality of Life (Jameela K Warrier, & Sam Sananda Raj,1999)
5. Social Interaction Pattern Scale (M.S. Razeena Padmam & Bindu Salim, 2008)
6. Social Support Scale (Procidino and Heller, 1983)
7. Personal data sheet (prepared by the investigator)

Statistical Analyses

One way Anova was used to find out the differences among the three groups of wives in Marital Adjustment, Stress, Self-Concept, Quality of Life, Social Interaction Pattern and Social Support.

Two way Anova was computed to find out the differences among the three groups of wives in Marital Adjustment, Stress, Self-Concept, Quality of Life, Social Interaction Pattern and Social Support with respect to socio demographic variables.

Sheffe test was conducted to find out the pair wise differences following Anova.

Product Moment Correlations were done to find out the relationship between Marital Adjustment and the five psycho social correlates.

Product moment correlations were done to find out the relationship between Marital Adjustment and the selected socio demographic variables.

Findings of the Study

1. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and the Arab wives do not differ in marital adjustment.

2. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men have the highest stress and Arab wives have the lowest stress. Expatriate wives in Qatar and wives in Kerala of expatriate men do not differ in stress.

3. Arab wives have the highest self-concept and wives in Kerala have the lowest self-concept. There is no difference between wives in Kerala of expatriate men and expatriate wives in Qatar in self-concept.

4. Expatriate wives in Qatar have the highest quality of life and wives in Kerala have the lowest quality of life. There is no difference between Arab wives and wives in Kerala and between Arab wives and expatriate wives in Qatar in quality of life.

5. Wives in Kerala have the highest social interaction pattern and Arab wives have the lowest. There is no difference between wives in Kerala and expatriate wives in Qatar in social interaction pattern.

6. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in social support.

7. Working wives have better marital adjustment than non-working wives. Working Arab wives have the highest marital adjustment and working wives in Kerala have the lowest marital adjustment. Non-working Arab wives have the highest marital adjustment and non-working expatriate wives in Qatar have the lowest marital adjustment.

8. Wives working in public sector have better marital adjustment than wives working in private sector. Arab wives working in public sector have the highest marital adjustment and expatriate wives in Qatar working in public sector have the lowest marital adjustment. Expatriate wives in Qatar working in private sector have the highest marital adjustment and wives in Kerala working in private sector have the lowest marital adjustment.

9. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in marital adjustment with respect to their age, type of family, years of married life, parental status and type of job.

10. Wives aged above 40 years, experience more stress than wives aged between 19 years to 40 years. Wives in Kerala aged above 40 years have the highest stress while Arab wives who are above 40 years of age have the lowest stress. Wives in Kerala aged 19 years to 40 years have the highest stress and Arab wives aged 19 years to 40 years have the lowest stress.

11. Working wives have higher stress than non-working wives. Working wives in Kerala of expatriate men have the highest stress while Arab working wives have the lowest stress. Non-working wives in Kerala have the highest stress and non -working Arab wives have the lowest stress.

12. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in stress with respect to their type of family, years of married life, parental status, nature of job and type of job.

13. Non-working wives have high self-concept than the working wives. Non-working Arab wives have the highest self-concept and non-working wives in Kerala have the lowest self-concept. Working Arab wives have the highest self-concept and working expatriate wives in Qatar have the lowest self-concept.

14. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in self-concept with respect to age, type of family, years of married life, parental status, nature of job and type of job.

15. Wives aged between 19 years to 40 years have better Quality of Life than wives aged above 40 years. Expatriate wives in Qatar aged between19 years to 40 years have the highest quality of life and wives in Kerala of expatriate men aged 19 years to 40 years have the lowest quality of life. Expatriate wives in Qatar of age above 40 years have the highest quality of life and Arab wives of age above 40 years have the lowest quality of life.

16. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in Quality of Life with respect to their type of family, years of married life, parental status, employment status, nature of job and type of job.

17. Wives who are married for more than 5 years have more social interaction pattern than wives who are married for 2 years to 5 years. There is no difference in social interaction pattern between wives who are married for less than 2 years and those married for more than 5 years. Expatriate wives in Qatar who are married for more than 5 years have the highest social interaction pattern and the lowest social interaction pattern is for Arab wives with the same duration of marriage. Wives in Kerala who are married for 2 years to 5 years get the highest social interaction pattern and Arab wives who are married for 2 years to 5 years get the lowest.

18. Working wives have the higher social interaction pattern than non-working wives. Expatriate working wives in Qatar have the highest social interaction pattern and Arab working wives have the lowest social interaction pattern. Non-working wives in Kerala have the highest social interaction pattern and non-working Arab wives have the lowest.

19. Wives who are professionals and non professionals have the highest social interaction pattern than technicians. Expatriate working wives who are professionals have the highest social interaction pattern and Arab wives working as professionals have the lowest social interaction pattern. Non professional working wives in Kerala have the highest social interaction pattern and non professional Arab working wives have the lowest social interaction pattern. Expatriate wives in Qatar working as technicians have the highest social interaction and Arab wives working as technicians have the lowest.

20. Wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in Social Interaction Pattern in relation to their age, type of family, parental status and nature of job.

21. Professionals have more social support than non-professionals. Arab working wives who are professionals have the highest social support and the expatriate

wives in Qatar who are professionals have the lowest social support. wives in Kerala working as non professionals have the highest social support and expatriate wives in Qatar working as non professionals have the lowest. Expatriate wives working as technicians gets the highest social support and wives in Kerala working as technician get the lowest

22. The wives in Kerala of expatriate men, expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives do not differ in Social Support in relation to their age, type of family, years of married life, parental status, employment status and nature of job.

23. Marital Adjustment has a negative relationship with Stress for expatriate wives in Qatar. As the stress increases marital adjustment decreases and vice-versa. There is no relationship between these two variables for wives in Kerala of expatriate men and Arab wives.

24. There is no relationship between marital adjustment and self-concept for expatriate wives in Qatar, wives in Kerala of expatriate men and Arab wives.

25. Marital adjustment has positive relationship with quality of life for expatriate wives in Qatar and wives in Kerala of expatriate men. Marital adjustment will increase as quality of life increases for expatriate wives in Qatar and wives in Kerala of expatriate men. There is no relationship between these two variables for Arab wives.

26. Marital adjustment and social interaction pattern are positively related for expatriate wives in Qatar. Marital adjustment will be more as social interaction pattern increases for expatriate wives in Qatar. There is no relationship between these two variables for wives in Kerala of expatriate men and Arab wives.

27. Marital adjustment has a positive relationship with social support for expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives. Marital adjustment will be more as social support increases for expatriate wives in Qatar and Arab wives. There is no relationship between these two variables for wives in Kerala of expatriate men.

28. Marital Adjustment and years of married life are positively related for Arab wives. As years of married life increases marital adjustment increases for Arab wives.

There is no relationship between these two variables for wives in Kerala of expatriate men and expatriate wives in Qatar.

29. There is no relationship between marital adjustment and age for expatriate wives in Qatar and wives in Kerala of expatriate men and Arab wives.

Implications

- The findings of the study can be used to widen the existing body of knowledge in the area of migration.
- This study opens a new channel for further research on the problems created by occupational separation of couples on marriage, family and society.
- The findings that the wives of expatriate men have the highest stress and the lowest self-concept must provide the society and the family members an insight to explore the effects of various familial and socio-cultural factors in the lives of wives of expatriate men.
- These findings are suggestive of implementing family schemes and other welfare activities for NRI wives which would create a sense of security for these women left behind to fight the burdens all by themselves.
- Awareness to the family members should be given by social organizations regarding the various issues faced by the women of expatriate men. These wives should be closely involved in planning the family's financial future and thereby secure financial freedom. Job responsibility should be equally shared within the family members.
- Government can organize and promote self-help groups so that their emotional problems can be shared and channelized.
- The attitudes of society towards the occupationally separated wives are not encouraging. They should be supported to withstand the stress.
- The government should initiate necessary steps for protecting wives of expatriate men against various abuses and harassments.

- Private firms lack benefits like job security, end of service schemes, and contributory pension schemes in contrary to the government jobs. Hence adequate measures should be taken by the private firms to include these schemes and benefits for their employees.
- The findings also may help the government and policy makers to devise mechanisms by which the stress of wives can be alleviated. Schemes can be worked out in such a way that women in Kerala improves their quality of lives and thereby their self-concept.